 **SOUTH MOUNTAIN TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR**
ALIGNMENT SHIFT TO MINIMIZE IMPACT TO SECTION 4(f) RESOURCE
PHOENIX SOUTH MOUNTAIN PARK /PRESERVE
OPTION 3 - ESTRELLA DRIVE INTERCHANGE

South Mountain Transportation Corridor
TRACS No. 202L MA 054 H5764 01L
FHWA Federal Project No. NH-202-D 11

FIGURE 5



Arizona Department of Transportation

Intermodal Transportation Division

206 South Seventeenth Avenue Phoenix, Arizona 85007-3213

Janet Napolitano
Governor

Victor M. Mendez
Director

Sam Elters
State Engineer

October 7, 2005

The Honorable Richard Narcia
Governor, Gila River Indian Community
PO Box 97
Sacaton, AZ 85247

Dear Governor Narcia,

On August 24, 2005, the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) forwarded a letter to Gila River Community management and staff outlining potential interchange locations on the South Mountain Freeway and presenting three options for a 51st Avenue Traffic Interchange (TI). An error was noted in the text listing the potential interchange locations. The correct locations are, from east to west:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ▪ 40 th Street | ▪ 25th Avenue |
| ▪ 32 nd Street | ▪ 51 st Avenue |
| ▪ 24 th Street | ▪ Elliot Road |
| ▪ Desert Foothills Parkway | ▪ Dobbins Road |
| ▪ 17 th Avenue | ▪ Baseline Road |

The original letter indicated a potential interchange location at 27th Avenue. The actual proposed location is **25th Avenue** and is accurately listed on Figure 1 attached to the original letter. Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience this oversight may have caused.

Community input is requested by October 31, 2005 on these very important matters. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me at 602-712-8274.

We look forward to continuing to work with you, Sandra Shade and the Community on these matters.

Sincerely,

Daniel S. Lance
Deputy State Engineer
Valley Transportation



The Honorable Richard Narcia
October 7, 2005
Page Two

c: GRIC Lt. Governor Thomas
GRIC Tribal Council
Shannon Wilhelmsen, ADOT
✓ Michael Bruder, ADOT
Bill Vachon, FHWA
Project File



Janet Napolitano
Governor

Victor M. Mendez
Director

Arizona Department of Transportation

Office of the Director

206 South Seventeenth Avenue Phoenix, Arizona 85007-3213

David P. Jankofsky
Deputy Director

November 7, 2005

The Honorable Richard Narcia
Governor Gila River Indian Community
P.O. Box 97
Sacaton, AZ 85247

Dear Governor Narcia:

Thank you for continuing to communicate your concerns with ADOT. In response, I offer the following information.

1. In regards to Resolution GR-119-05, ADOT is still in the process of evaluating and assessing the Gila River Indian Community's requests. In the meantime, ADOT remain committed to working with you and will be ready to initiate negotiations with the Gila River Indian Community in the near future.
2. In reference to communication protocol with the Gila River Indian Community, ADOT is reviewing the available options and a contact person will be designated in the near future.
3. Finally, in relation to SR 347, ADOT's understanding of needs and potential improvements are outlined below:
 - SR 347 at Casa Blanca Road:
A draft Traffic Warrants Study has been completed by the Tucson District and a complete Accident History Report has been requested from the Gila River Indian Community to further analyze and update the Draft Study. ADOT is still awaiting the Accident Report Data, which could change the outcome of the Draft Study. Further discussion and coordination is expected to occur between the Tucson District and the Gila River Indian Community to finalize this issue.
 - SR 347 at Rinker Sand and Gravel Plant:
The Tucson District has received and reviewed the Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) and it indicates that a traffic signal is not warranted at this location based on current conditions. However, a traffic signal will be warranted if the Rinker Sand and Gravel Plant completes the proposed



Governor Richard Narcia
November 7, 2005
Page Two

expansion of their operation. In that case, as with all new development impacts throughout the state, Rinker will be expected to pay for the traffic signal. In the meantime, ADOT will coordinate with Rinker under a cost sharing agreement to add an acceleration lane in the SB direction on SR 347 as an interim improvement and could possibly include it in an upcoming pavement preservation project in this area.

- SR 347 at Old Maricopa Road:
It is not clear to ADOT what the specific traffic concerns are at this location. However, the Phoenix Maintenance District has identified some signing improvements that consist of upgrading the stop sign at Maricopa Road to a 60-inch and the warning signs to 48 x 48 inch signs. The District is also considering adding a right turn acceleration lane and taper from the Maricopa Road to the SR 347. We believe these improvements will enhance the functionality and efficiency of this intersection. Future development will have significant impact on the operation of this intersection. ADOT remains committed to working with you and will require the necessary Traffic Impact Analysis to ensure adequate improvements are identified and constructed by such future development.

Should you have any questions, please contact my office.

Sincerely,



Victor M. Mendez

cc: The Honorable Governor Janet Napolitano
Mary V. Thomas, Lt. Governor, GRIC
Gary Bohnee, Chief of Staff, GRIC
Sandra Shade, Director, GRIC DOT
David Snider, Supervisor, Pinal County Board of Supervisors
GRIC Community Council
Robert Hollis, Division Administrator, FHWA
David Jankofsky, Deputy Director, ADOT
Sam Elters, State Engineer, ADOT
Dan Lance, Deputy State Engineer, Valley Transportation, ADOT
Dennis Alvarez, Tucson District Engineer, ADOT
John Hauskins, Phoenix Maintenance Engineer, ADOT
Shannon Wilhelmsen, Director, Communications and Community Partnerships, ADOT

Attachment

Richard P. Narcia
GOVERNOR



MARY V. THOMAS
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Gila River Indian Community

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR & LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

October 12, 2005

Mr. Victor Mendez, Director
Arizona Department of Transportation
206 S. Seventeenth Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Mr. Mendez:

A request from the Gila River Indian Community was sent to your office dated March 15, 2005 regarding traffic and safety concerns at the intersection of State Route 347 and Casa Blanca Road. At that time, a request was made to ADOT to undertake a traffic study to determine whether placing a signal at this intersection was warranted.

Correspondence dated April 4, 2005 from Mr. Dennis Alvarez, Tucson District Engineer, stated that Mr. Alvarez' staff would be in contact with our Department of Transportation staff on this matter. The correspondence also indicated that a study would be undertaken within 30 days and a full report would be completed within 90 days. It is my understanding that no follow-up occurred, and that the Community only learned of a "Draft Traffic Signal Evaluation" document, after the study had already been completed. This concern was transmitted to Mr. Alvarez, with a copy to your office, in yet another correspondence dated August 1, 2005. As a part of this transmittal, copies of traffic count comparisons and accident report data was included.

We find it unacceptable that ADOT has been unwilling to formally issue a response to our August correspondence. It was understood from our July 2005 Community Council meeting with your staff, that ADOT was committed to taking a more proactive approach in working with our Community and keeping us updated as to the transportation projects and activities within and surrounding our Community that fall within ADOT's jurisdiction.

On a similar matter, there was a separate study conducted for one of our tribal entities by Lee Engineering for a traffic signal on State Route 347 and the Rinker Sand and Gravel Plant for which a response has not been received.

We also have a traffic safety concern at the intersection of Queen Creek Road (SR 347) and "Old" Maricopa Road that we feel should also be studied by ADOT.

I am again requesting that an updated Traffic Signal Evaluation document be sent directly to my office with a courtesy copy to Ms. Sandra Shade, Director for our Community's Department of Transportation. Upon our review, we would like to meet with you regarding this matter. We would also appreciate a status update on the study conducted by Lee Engineering.

Please feel free to contact my office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Richard P. Narcia, Governor
Gila River Indian Community

cc: Lt. Governor Mary V. Thomas
GRIC Community Council
Gary Bohnée, Chief of Staff
Sandra Shade, Director, GRIC DOT
Supervisor David Snider, Pinal County Board of Supervisors

Richard P. Narcia
GOVERNOR



MARY V. THOMAS
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Gila River Indian Community

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR & LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

October 14, 2005

Mr. Victor Mendez, Director
Arizona Department of Transportation
206 S. Seventeenth Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85007-3213

Dear Director Mendez:

On behalf of the Gila River Indian Community (the "Community"), I appreciate the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for taking the time to meet to discuss important transportation issues that face our respective organizations.

As such, I believe the key to building a successful partnership is to develop a better communication process and protocol. Central to this effort is the need to identify a point of contact in our respective organizations that is both knowledgeable and capable of speaking in an official capacity. For the Community, Ms. Sandra Shade, Director, Gila River Department of Transportation will continue to serve as the primary contact.

Consistent with our discussion, the Community would like to have Mr. Bill Hayden serve as the ADOT's primary liaison to the Community. As a part of your current team, Mr. Hayden brings to the table the requisite experience in working with tribal governments. He has an established relationship with the Community Council, key staff, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Of equal importance are his experience, knowledge and respect for our tribal protocol. The Lieutenant Governor and I both feel strongly that Mr. Hayden has demonstrated the ability to work with our leadership in an effective manner and, therefore, remain unyielding in our request that he serve as the key point of contact from ADOT to work with our Community on this project. We believe Mr. Hayden will move this project forward in a positive manner in the spirit of communication and cooperation with all stakeholders.

Importantly, the Community recognizes the Interstate 10 (I-10) Widening Project is the number one statewide priority project for ADOT. As such, we feel strongly that ADOT

must bring an experienced and professional project management team who will work closely with our key staff in moving this project forward.

The Community Council adopted Resolution GR-119-05 on August 5, 2005 that identifies several priority areas regarding the alignment, improvement, operation and maintenance of, and access to Interstate 10 within the boundaries of our Community. A copy of this resolution has been provided to you and Mr. Robert Hollis of FHWA so that your respective organizations may begin the review process while we concurrently move forward with a Community outreach program and additional input and participation.

Again, it was a pleasure to have the opportunity to meet with you and Mr. Hollis and I look forward to a mutually beneficial working relationship. Your consideration of the Community's recommendations is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Richard P. Narcia, Governor
Gila River Indian Community

cc: Lt. Governor Mary V. Thomas
Gary Bohnee, Chief of Staff, GRIC
Sandra Shade, Director, GRIC DOT
Robert Hollis, FHWA Division Administrator
The Honorable Governor Janet Napolitano



Janet Napolitano
Governor

Victor M. Mendez
Director

Arizona Department of Transportation

Office of the Director

206 South Seventeenth Avenue Phoenix, Arizona 85007-3213

November 9, 2005

David P. Jankofsky
Deputy Director

The Honorable Richard Narcia
Governor Gila River Indian Community
P.O. Box 97
Sacaton, AZ 85247

Dear Governor Narcia:

Please accept this communication as a formal follow-up to some communication items we understand Mr. Bill Hayden has relayed to the Community. Our understanding is that you have already been informed of the following items and this communication is intended to be a more formal summary from my office.

Currently, ADOT is in the midst of an extensive public involvement effort to brief local communities, elected officials and media organizations regarding the South Mountain Freeway project in preparation for an extensive round of public meetings to be held next week.

Public Meetings

Public meetings will be held from Noon - 8 p.m. on November 15 in Avondale, November 16 in Laveen and November 17 in Ahwatukee to discuss the South Mountain Freeway study. Large aerial photographs overlayed with the freeway alignments will be on display at the meeting to illustrate the potential right of way impacts to give the public their first look at a detailed depiction of the South Mountain Freeway alignments. These meetings will generate significant comments and discussion among the public, elected officials and the media.

Local Agency Briefing

My understanding is that Mr. Hayden invited the Community to attend an agency briefing ADOT will hold on November 9, 2005 at 3 p.m. to discuss the information that will be presented at the public meetings. At this time, I have not heard whether or not Community representatives are planning on attending the briefing and my hope is that you are in attendance.

Media Briefings

On November 8, 2005 ADOT held media briefings with the Arizona Republic and the Ahwatukee Foothills News to discuss the South Mountain Freeway study.

General Communication

ADOT has produced a newsletter to provide general information about the project as well as to advertise the public meetings. We have distributed nearly 100,000 newsletters in Ahwatukee and the West Valley to homes and businesses in the study



The Honorable Richard Narcia
November 9, 2005
Page Two

area. We also have set aside several thousand brochures for distribution on the Gila River Indian Community.

My understanding is that Mr. Hayden asked representatives from the Community whether or not the brochures should be distributed to Community members and we have not yet heard whether or not the Gila River Indian Community will allow such distribution. Please let us know if you would like us to distribute the brochures.

Traffic Interchange and Drainage Issues

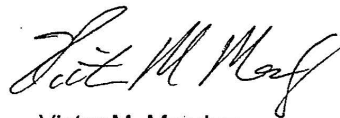
The location of future traffic interchanges along the South Mountain Freeway is another issue that we would like to have input from the Gila River Indian Community. We have written letters to the Community on August 24, 2005 and October 7, 2005 seeking input from the Community about the Community's preference for interchange locations along the South Mountain Freeway. Also, my understanding is that Mr. Hayden recently communicated to the Community the preferences stated by the City of Phoenix to eliminate the proposed South Mountain interchange at 32nd Street and to move the proposed interchange at 25th Avenue further west to match up with Chandler Boulevard at 27th Avenue. The interchange at 32nd Street has generated considerable concern among Ahwatukee residents given the number of homes that would need to be acquired if it is built and the potential increase in traffic passing by Desert Vista High School. It would be extremely helpful to know whether or not the Gila River Indian Community has a preference for an interchange at 32nd Street.

In the near future, we also will need to discuss the analysis of drainage impacts and methods to address drainage associated with the South Mountain Freeway study.

Since ADOT staff has informed me that they have not heard from Gila River Indian Community representatives on these subjects, I wanted to confirm that the information regarding developments on the South Mountain Freeway study and the project's public involvement efforts have been communicated so that the Gila River Indian Community may provide input to the study team.

I look forward to receiving information from the Community regarding the above items.

Sincerely,



Victor M. Mendez

cc: Mary V. Thomas, Lt. Governor, GRIC
Gary Bohnee, Chief of Staff, GRIC
Sandra Shade, Director, GRIC DOT
Robert Hollis, Division Administrator, FHWA
David Jankofsky, Deputy Director, ADOT
Sam Elters, State Engineer, ADOT
Dan Lance, Deputy State Engineer, ADOT
Shannon Wilhelmsen, Director, Communications and Community Partnerships, ADOT
Bill Hayden, Life Cycle Coordinator, ADOT



Janet Napolitano
Governor

Victor M. Mendez
Director

Arizona Department of Transportation

Intermodal Transportation Division

206 South Seventeenth Avenue Phoenix, Arizona 85007-3213

Sam Elters
State Engineer

January 19, 2006

Leslie Spencer-Snyder
Phoenix Mountain Preservation Council
P.O. Box 26121
Phoenix, AZ 85068-6121

Re: Project Name: South Mountain Transportation Corridor
ADOT TRACS No.: 202 MA 54 H5764 01L
Project No.: RAM-202-C-200

Dear Ms. Spencer-Snyder

On November 7, 2005, a presentation was made to the Phoenix Mountain Preserve Council (PMPC) regarding the potential impacts on South Mountain Park/Preserve (SMPP) as a result of the proposed South Mountain Transportation Corridor (SMTC). The purpose of the meeting, in addition to updating the PMPC about the project, was to solicit input regarding measures to minimize harm to the park.

At the conclusion of the meeting, attendees were requested to complete and return a comment sheet. The following represents a summary of the comments received during the meeting and through the comment forms:

- The PMPC was in favor of the No Build Alternative
- Land in the SMPP is irreplaceable
- Another method should be found to move people
- There is a Parks Board resolution opposing use of the Park.

In addition to measures already undertaken to reduce harm, such as reducing the right-of-way impacts, the following measures to minimize harm to the Park are under consideration:

- The project team is working with the City of Phoenix and Maricopa County in locating trailheads on planned trails or relocating trailheads that may be impacted.
- ADOT, FHWA, and the City of Phoenix could examine opportunities to provide replacement lands to those converted to the freeway use.
- The proposed the Eastern Section Alternative of the SMTC would be located as far south as possible to avoid the creation of remnant parcels.
- Sound barriers would be constructed as part of the Eastern Section Alternative on the approach to SMPP near the Foothills Reserve residential development, and just past SMPP near the Dusty Lane residential area. Although these barriers are not specifically for SMPP, they would provide partial noise mitigation to the park/preserve
- Impacts on visual character would result from the Eastern Section Alternative and associated cuts into South Mountain. The proposed freeway would be the dominant feature in the area and would introduce forms, lines, colors, and textures distinctly different from the existing ridgelines. The visual impacts of the section of freeway adjacent to SMPP could be reduced by blending the color, line, and form of the freeway with the surrounding environment.
- Vegetation buffers could be used to screen views of the freeway.
- Any retention basins and their landscape treatments could be blended into the surrounding area.

Ms. Leslie Spencer-Snider
Page 2
January 19, 2006

- Larger saguaros, mature trees, and larger shrubs could be transplanted in relatively natural areas near the Eastern Section Alternative to blend with the existing landscape.
- Clustering or grouping plant material in an informal pattern to break up the linear form of the freeway could help 'naturalize' the surrounding area.
- Landscape treatments on the periphery of right-of-way areas at overpass locations could be installed as well as on areas adjacent to residential development.
- Aesthetic treatments and patterning could be applied to sound barriers and screen walls, bridges, concrete barriers, retaining walls, and highly visible headwalls.
- The use of earth colors for lighting standards, overpasses, abutments, retaining and screening walls, and sound barriers could blend the freeway into the natural setting.
- When constructing concrete barriers, highly visible headwalls, and end walls for box culverts, materials and textures could be used to blend these structures into the existing landscape.
- Newly exposed rock faces could be blended with natural rock features to incorporate characteristics of the adjacent natural rock and rounding and blinding new slopes could mimic the existing contours and highlight natural formations.
- Culverts could be sized large enough to accommodate equestrians, bicyclists, and hiker use as well as wildlife crossings.

Assuming the PMPC does not provide any further insight into mitigation, these measures will be presented in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

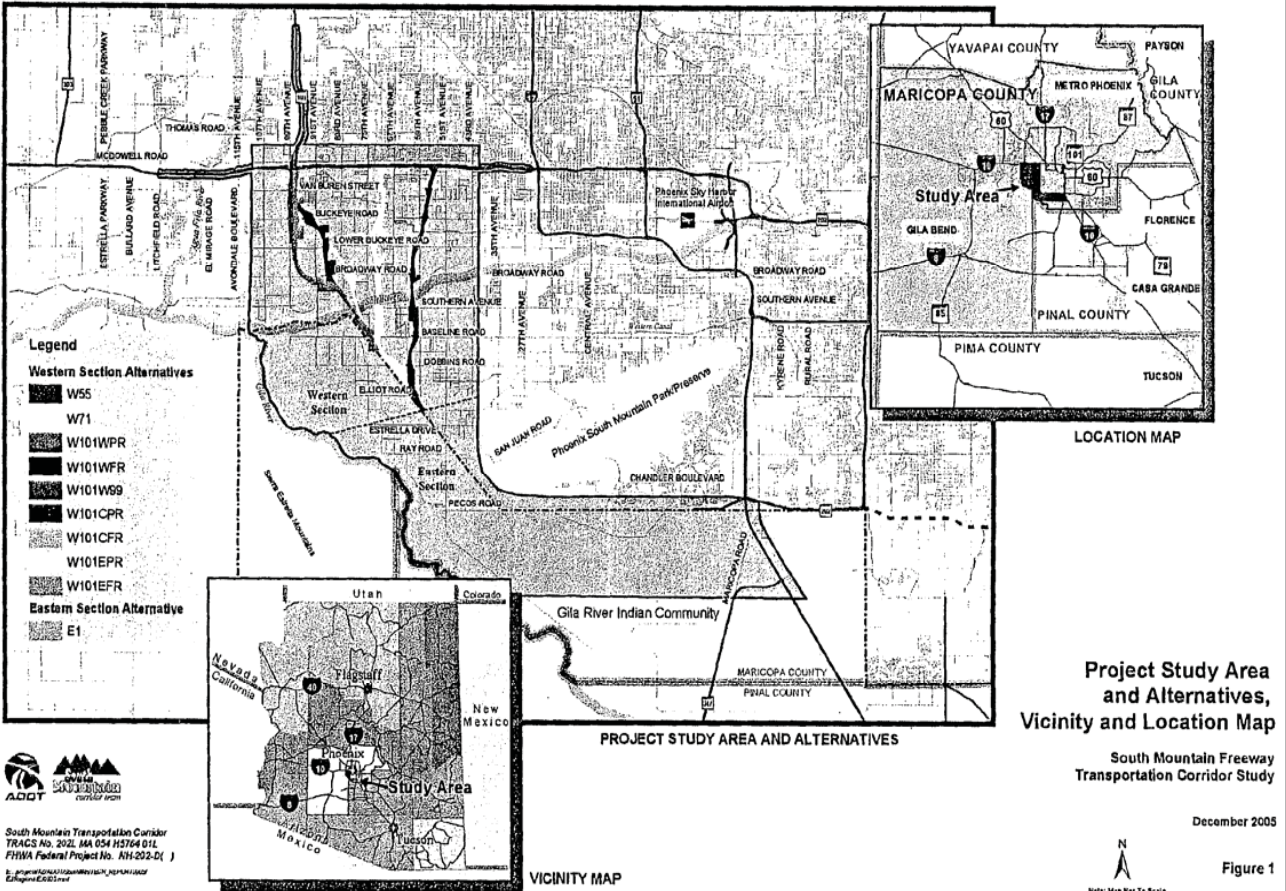
Comments regarding the meeting summary should be addressed to Audrey Unger, HDR Engineering, Inc. via U.S. Mail at 3200 East Camelback Road, Suite 350, Phoenix, Arizona 85018 or by email at Audrey.Unger@hdrinc.com. A response received by February 19, 2006 or sooner would be greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Ralph H. Ellis

Ralph Ellis
Environmental Planner
Environmental & Enhancement Group

Enclosure: Project Study Area and Alternatives, Vicinity and Location Map



This graphic was included as an enclosure to the four letters that follow in this appendix (Coover, Burke, Nowicki, Spencer-Snider).



Janet
Napolitano
Governor

Victor M.
Mendez
Director

Arizona Department of Transportation
Intermodal Transportation Division
206 South Seventeenth Avenue Phoenix, Arizona 85007-3213

January 19, 2006

Sam Elters
State
Engineer

Jim Burke
Phoenix City Hall
City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department
200 W. Washington Street, 16th Floor
Phoenix, AZ 85003

Re: Project Name: South Mountain Transportation Corridor
ADOT TRACS No.: 202 MA 54 H5764 01L
Project No.: RAM-202-C-200

Dear Mr. Burke

On September 22, 2005, representatives from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), HDR Engineering, Inc. (HDR), the City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation Board (Board), and the public met at the Phoenix Zoo to discuss the potential impacts on Phoenix South Mountain Park/Preserve (SMPP) as a result of the potential South Mountain Transportation Corridor (SMTC) and to solicit input from park stakeholders regarding measures to minimize harm to the park. This correspondence serves as a summary of that meeting along with a discussion of future related actions.

The meeting commenced with an update to the Parks and Recreation Board on the progress of the SMTC Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) with a focus on the SMPP. The project team gave a presentation highlighting the freeway alternatives, the environmental study process, and the potential impacts on SMPP. A two-sided handout was distributed to the Board that included the freeway alternatives on one side and the Regional Freeway System 2003/2030 Traffic Volumes on the other. A comment form was also distributed with the intention of receiving additional suggestions to minimize harm to SMPP.

The following comments were offered by Board members:

Gila River Indian Community (GRIC) Land

- What is the status of the GRIC coordination?
 - Response: GRIC Coordination, at the time of the meeting, was ongoing.
- City of Phoenix should join ADOT/FHWA at the negotiating table and take more time to coordinate with GRIC.
 - Response: ADOT/FHWA have had continuous coordination with GRIC since the start of the study in 2000. Although GRIC continues to communicate no desire for the project on their land, ADOT will continue to communicate with GRIC.
- ADOT should slow down and allow this process and coordination to occur, noting that the GRIC process takes a longer time.
 - Response: See above. Also, the SMTC is an integral part of the Regional Freeway System (RFS) and an important link in optimizing the RFS's operation. Planned since 1985, the project remains critical. ADOT, in turn, has an obligation to be responsive to the traveling public.

Mr. Jim Burke
Page 2
January 19, 2006

- The Board unanimously passed a resolution that "strongly opposes any alignment that goes through SMPP." They also feel that the City of Phoenix and ADOT should work with GRIC "as long as it takes" to allow for alignments to be studied.
 - Response: See above responses
- There is new development in GRIC other than casinos.
 - Response: noted

Potential Freeway Alternative Through SMPP

- Board does not want to see the cuts in SMPP.
 - Response: noted
- The land at the western edge of the SMPP (nose) was purchased by ADOT/City of Phoenix as joint condemnation land to be used by the SMPP.
 - Response: noted
- The project team should work to improve the treatment of habitat and learn from the good and bad experiences of State Route 51. Cuts should blend in to the surroundings and not look like a scar.
 - Response: ADOT will prepare a proposed plan to mitigate Park impacts. The plan will include measures relevant to habitat and slope treatment.
- Options for mitigation include adding trailheads that could be accessed from the freeway interchanges, land trade-offs, and a tunnel.
 - Response: Trailhead and land tradeoffs are still under discussion as possible mitigation. At this time, for design and operational reasons, a tunnel is no longer under consideration.
- How many lanes is the freeway going to accommodate? How will the freeway work with respect to the power lines and water line that currently go through SMPP?
 - Response: Interim 3-lanes in each direction; Ultimate 4-lanes plus an HOV lane for a total of 5-lanes in each direction
- Has the Board/City approved land for the freeway through SMPP?
 - Response: We are unaware of ADOT purchasing land within the Park; however, land adjacent to the Park has been purchased by ADOT. Additionally, the 1988 City of Phoenix General Plan shows the proposed SMTC, designated as the "planned southwestern loop", going through the Park.

No comments or questions were offered by the public.

In conclusion, the Board unanimously passed a resolution that "strongly opposes any alignment that goes through SMPP." They also feel that the City of Phoenix and ADOT should continue to work with GRIC to allow alignments to be studied on GRIC land.

In addition to measures already undertaken to reduce harm, such as reducing the right-of-way impacts, the following measures to minimize harm to the SMPP are under consideration:

- The project team is working with the City of Phoenix and Maricopa County in locating trailheads on planned trails or in relocated trailheads that may be impacted.
- ADOT, FHWA, and the City of Phoenix could examine opportunities to provide replacement lands to those converted to the freeway use.
- The proposed Eastern Section Alternative of the SMTC would be located as far south as possible to avoid the creation of remnant parcels.
- Sound barriers would be constructed as part of the Eastern Section Alternative on the approach to SMPP near the Foothills Reserve residential development, and just past SMPP near the Dusty Lane residential



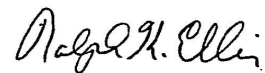
Mr. Jim Burke
Page 3
January 19, 2006

- area. Although these barriers are not specifically for SMPP, they would provide partial noise mitigation to the park/preserve
- Impacts on visual character would result from the Eastern Section Alternative and associated cuts into South Mountain. The proposed freeway would be the dominant feature in the area and would introduce forms, lines, colors, and textures distinctly different from the existing ridgelines. The visual impacts of the section of freeway adjacent to SMPP could be reduced by blending the color, line, and form of the freeway with the surrounding environment.
 - Vegetation buffers could be used to screen views of the freeway.
 - Any retention basins and their landscape treatments could be blended into the surrounding area.
 - Larger saguaros, mature trees, and larger shrubs could be transplanted in relatively natural areas near the Eastern Section Alternative to blend with the existing landscape.
 - Clustering or grouping plant material in an informal pattern to break up the linear form of the freeway could help 'naturalize' the surrounding area.
 - Landscape treatments on the periphery of right-of-way areas at overpass locations could be installed as well as on areas adjacent to residential development.
 - Aesthetic treatments and patterning could be applied to sound barriers and screen walls, bridges, concrete barriers, retaining walls, and highly visible headwalls.
 - The use of earth colors for lighting standards, overpasses, abutments, retaining and screening walls, and sound barriers could blend the freeway into the natural setting.
 - When constructing concrete barriers, highly visible headwalls, and end walls for box culverts, materials and textures could be used to blend these structures into the existing landscape.
 - Newly exposed rock faces could be blended with natural rock features to incorporate characteristics of the adjacent natural rock and rounding and blinding new slopes could mimic the existing contours and highlight natural formations.
 - Culverts could be sized large enough to accommodate equestrians, bicyclists, and hiker use as well as wildlife crossings.

Assuming the Park Board does not provide any further insight into mitigation, these measures will be presented in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Comments regarding the meeting summary should be addressed to Audrey Unger, HDR Engineering, Inc. via U.S. Mail at 3200 East Camelback Road, Suite 350, Phoenix, Arizona 85018 or by email at Audrey.Unger@hdrinc.com. A **response received by February 19, 2006 or sooner would be greatly appreciated.** Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,
Ralph Ellis



Environmental Planner
Environmental & Enhancement Group

Enclosure: Project Study Area and Alternatives, Vicinity and Location Map



Janet
Napolitano
Governor

Victor M.
Mendez
Director

Arizona Department of Transportation
Intermodal Transportation Division
206 South Seventeenth Avenue Phoenix, Arizona 85007-3213

Sam Elters
State Engineer

January 19, 2006

Mr. Scott Nowicki
Chairman
Mountain Bike Association of America (Arizona)
PO Box 41255
Mesa, AZ 85274-1255

Re: Project Name: South Mountain Transportation Corridor
ADOT TRACS No.: 202 MA 54 H5764 01L
Project No.: RAM-202-C-200

Dear Mr. Nowicki:

In coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate alternatives for the proposed South Mountain Transportation Corridor (SMTC). As you know, the Eastern Section Alternative of the proposed SMTC would go through the southwestern portion of South Mountain Park/Preserve (SMPP) and would use approximately 32 acres of parkland, approximately 8.5 acres less than the original 1988 plan for the SMTC. Our consultant, HDR Engineering, Inc., spoke with Ms. Jean Anderson, a past president and active member of the Arizona State Horsemen's Association, and we understand that your organization is not in favor of the freeway going through the Park. A letter from Ms. Sara Goodnick, the President of the Association also sent a letter (11-18-05) further reinforcing that your organization is not in favor of freeway construction through SMPP.

Currently, in the Eastern Section of the Study Area, the E1 Alternative is the build alternative (see attached map). Should the E1 Alternative be selected, ADOT would like to know what specific measures could be undertaken to lessen the impacts of the freeway on members of your organization using the park's amenities.

In addition to measures already undertaken to reduce harm, such as reducing the right-of-way impacts, the following measures to minimize harm to the Park are under consideration:

- The project team is working with the City of Phoenix and Maricopa County in locating trailheads on planned trails or relocating trailheads that may be impacted.
- ADOT, FHWA, and the City of Phoenix could examine opportunities to provide replacement lands to those converted to the freeway use.
- The proposed the Eastern Section Alternative of the SMTC would be located as far south as possible to avoid the creation of remnant parcels.
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